



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Park of
American Samoa

Pago Pago, AS 96799

Michael Larson
Public Information Officer
684 699-3982 ext 20 phone
684 699-3986 fax

National Park of American Samoa News Release

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National Park Provides Invasive Plant Management Training to Fijian Conservation Staff

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa—Recently, the National Park of American Samoa's Terrestrial Ecologist Tavita Togia, traveled to Fiji to deliver an invasive plant project management training course to staff from various National Trust of Fiji sites including Sigatoka Sand Dunes National Park, Yadua Taba Crested Iguana Sanctuary, and Waisali Rainforest Reserve.

Invasive alien plants are one of the main critical threats to Fiji's biodiversity. Local Fijian experts reported that the worst invasive plants spread across the islands are the African tulip, Rain tree, Wedelia, Guava, Vaivai, and Lantana. The purpose of this training was to provide weed control personnel additional skills and confidence necessary to manage invasive plant projects; further develop skills in the collection and management of data for project planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and accountability purposes; and familiarize the islanders with a management and planning system that is easy to use, maintain and is adaptable to any weed project.

The training included hands-on practical experience including two days at Sigatoka Sand Dune National Park setting up small study areas on African Tulip and Vaivai. The result of the study will help eradicate some of these species found in the Waisali Rainforest Reserve. It is the hope that participants will apply the new systematic approach they learned to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate invasive management projects to restore Fiji's environment.

Tavita Togia said, "Delaying weed control projects at special ecological areas such as Waisali Rainforest Reserve and the Yadua Taba Crested Iguana Sanctuary will result in extensive and possibly irreversible damage to the biodiversity of these places."

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Sigatoka Sand Dune National Park, Fiji's first national park and soon to be World Heritage Site, was established in 1989 to protect and preserve 650 acres of landscape, ecological, and cultural features. In February 2009, the Pacific Invasive Learning Network based at the South Pacific Regional Environment funded a Sigatoka ranger to visit and learn about the National Park of American Samoa's resource management program. This ranger returned to Fiji and started the first reforestation effort at the park.

The National Park of American Samoa has developed a successful community-based collaborative control effort to eradicate invasive plants and restore disturbed land in the park. The national park plays an important new role in helping Pacific Island Countries and Territories to save some of the best remaining intact forest in the Pacific islands.

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The National Park of American Samoa was established in 1988 to preserve the coral reefs, tropical rainforest, archeological and cultural resources, the habitat of fruit bats, and to provide educational opportunities for visitors and residents. National park lands and waters are leased from villages and the American Samoa Government through a long-term agreement with the National Park Service.

For more information about visiting the National Park of American Samoa, call 699-3982, email NPSA_Info@nps.gov, or go to www.nps.gov/npsa. Also, visit the national park's Facebook and Twitter pages.

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